

Alden Family sites to receive National Historic Landmark plaques from the National Park Service

On Aug. 1, the Alden House Historic Site and the Town of Duxbury will each receive bronze plaques from the National Park Service proclaiming the "Alden Family Sites" as a National Historic Landmark. The plaques will be presented at 2:30 p.m. by Marianne Peak, Supervisor of the Adams National Historic Park in Quincy, Massachusetts.

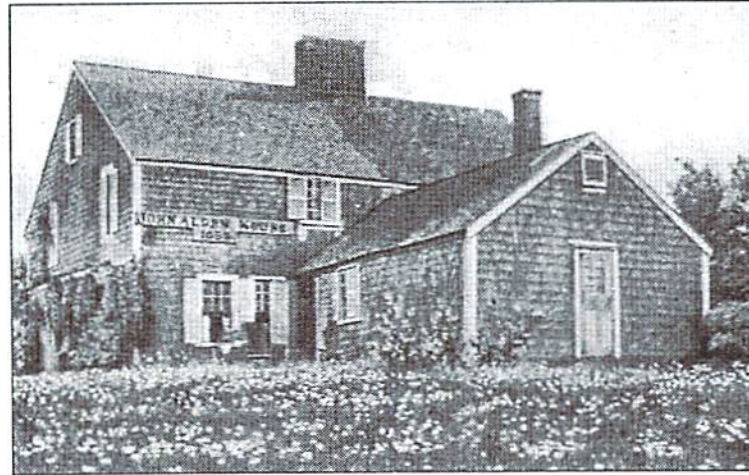
Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne approved the nomination of the Alden Family Sites in Duxbury, Massachusetts, on Oct. 6, 2008, making them an official National Historic Landmark. There are over 87,000 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but fewer than 2,500 have been awarded actual landmark status by the U.S. Department of the Interior. There are 184 National Historic Landmarks in Massachusetts, the second highest in the U.S. after New York, which has 257.

Two sites, contiguous to one another, were included in the nomination. One contains the c. 1700 Alden House, owned and maintained since 1907 by the Alden Kindred of America, a family association

consisting of Alden descendants (which today includes individuals of every racial and ethnic background). The other contains the archaeological site where the first c. 1630 Alden House was located. That property is owned by the Duxbury Schools Department, which was an enthusiastic co-sponsor of the nomination.

The John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites in Duxbury, Massachusetts, were both part of the 1627/28 100-acre grant to Mayflower passenger John Alden and his family. No other physical site is so prominently linked with specific Mayflower passengers.

The site acquired national historic and cultural significance thanks to the impact of "The Courtship of Miles Standish," a poem about the



courtship of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins published in 1858 by their descendant Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The desire of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Americans for a more human, family-focused story about the cultural and historical origins

of the United States made The Courtship the most popular national origins story in American folklore. The poem's popularity made the surviving Alden House the most important physical site associated with John and Priscilla and a focus of on-going national

public interest, especially since descendants continued to own and live in the house.

No other sites are so prominently associated with John Alden (c.1589/9-1687), a person of national significance in the U.S. colonial period. The ship's cooper on the Mayflower and a founder of the Plymouth Colony, Alden held positions of high economic and political importance for almost the entire seventy-two year history of Plymouth Colony (1620-1692), a span of public service unrivaled in seventeenth century colonial America and perhaps in the entire colonial period. He served the colony in almost every available capacity save that of governor (although he served as deputy or acting governor on two occasions).